



Friends of the Wild Rivers

ANNUAL REPORT 2010



View from the Rio Grand Gorge Bridge by Gak Stone

**PROTECTING RIVERS,
SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES**

SINCE 1988



Letter from the President and Executive Director

Dear Friends of New Mexico's Wild Rivers,

2010 marked the end of a decade that brought to exciting conclusion a number of projects Amigos Bravos initiated following Strategic Planning Sessions in 1998, 2003 and 2007.

We move into the next ten years ready to take on the challenges of an aggressively anti-environmental administration at the state level and with the understanding that we must find creative ways to respond to the impacts of climate change – impacts already being felt. We will need to find avenues in which to take vigorous action within a political arena where corporate welfare continues to be granted precedence over human health.

That said, 2010 was one of Amigos Bravos' most successful years ever in terms of protecting and restoring the waters we drink, the rivers and lakes in which we play, the waterways that grow our food, feed our livestock, and sustain wildlife.

The most notable success for Amigos Bravos and our partners is having negotiated a permit that requires Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to stop all discharge of radionuclides and other toxic pollutants from over 400 dump sites on the Pajarito Plateau within five years. EPA has stated that the Amigos Bravos negotiated permit is the most stringent individual stormwater discharge permit in the nation.

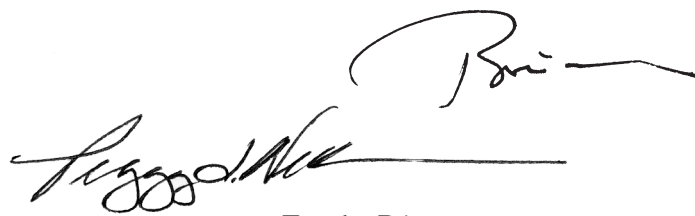
Ground water is the major source of drinking water for the people of New Mexico. We and our allies were able to establish ground-water protection regulations for the Dairy industry, 67% of which are known to be polluting ground water. Along with our partners, we were also able to provide the highest level of protection afforded by the Clean Water Act for over 700 miles of streams, 29 lakes, and approximately 6,000 acres of wetlands that form our most vulnerable headwaters. The new designation will ensure that there will be no new discharges to those waters and they will be protected for future generations.

2010 also saw the successful completion of the River Otter reintroduction project on the upper Rio Grande. We met our target of reintroducing thirty adolescent otters and we have received reports of their playing and mating as far south as Cochiti Lake and as far north as Ute Mountain.

The fall water quality monitoring season also brought to completion our three year Bosque Initiative, as a result of which over five hundred high school students gained hands-on experience monitoring ditches and drains in Albuquerque, integrated field work across their subject areas, and became more aware of the role that ditches play in their communities. Water quality monitoring revealed an array of pharmaceuticals and personal care products polluting waters that people play and fish in as well as waters that irrigate crops then return to the Rio Grande. These results have raised awareness across the region around emerging pollutants and led the Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority to institute a public awareness program, conduct extensive monitoring of their drinking water project, and investigate water treatment alternatives. Such alternatives will be designed to effectively remove pollutants from river water, making it suitable for human consumption.

We were able to accomplish all of this work thanks to a strong, highly dedicated staff and board of directors. The same team is now well positioned to take on the challenges of the new decade. Amigos Bravos assumes increasing responsibility for the protection of all of New Mexico's precious water resources and the corresponding health of New Mexicans. We have built a coalition of friends and allies. We remain creative and pro-active. We have knowledge and experience from our past successes and we will not shirk from our responsibilities. We will not allow the people's voice to be silenced.

This organization is your organization. Amigos Bravos and the work that we are able to accomplish could not be done without you. As we face new challenges, we invite you to increase your participation. We welcome your volunteer involvement and we need your financial investment in the future of New Mexico's rivers. As a dedicated member of Amigos Bravos, know that you are truly making a difference.



For the Río –
Peggy Nelson, President and
Brian Shields, Executive Director

THE RIVER TELLS A STORY — THE YEAR IN REVIEW

October 2009 - September 2010

Amigos Bravos Staff, Board of Directors, and an Advisory Council of community representatives from impacted communities and partner organizations carry out a strategic planning process every 3-4 years that develops our Strategic Plan. Currently, we have three strategic goals: Restore Watershed Health, Hold Polluters Accountable, and Build a River Protection Movement. To focus and increase the effectiveness of our work, we have identified three tools (or action strategies) by which to effectuate change across and within the strategic goals: policy development (and implementation), civic engagement (and action), and building community capacity.



Photo by Brian Shields

RESTORING WATERSHED HEALTH

- **River Otters** – After a decade of work, the river otter reintroduction program was successfully completed on the Upper Rio Grande with the introduction of 33 otters into the Rio Pueblo de Taos. The otters have adapted well and have been sighted as far south as Cochiti Reservoir and as far north as Ute Mountain. We are working with our partners to establish a monitoring program and assess release sites on the Upper Gila, which is our next goal.
- **Pharmaceuticals in the Middle Río Grande** – Working with over 500 high school students, we carried out water quality monitoring in the drains and ditches along the Middle Río Grande – from the Angostura Diversion to the I-25 Bridge – supported by major funding from the US Fish & Wildlife Service. As a result, the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority announced they would begin quarterly monitoring of the river, the treated drinking water, and the intake and discharge from the wastewater treatment plant. Our monitoring disclosed the presence of 9 pharmaceuticals and personal care products, including an endocrine disruptor (BPA or Bisphenol-a). We are looking at ways to eliminate pharmaceuticals from water treatment discharges, the major source of drugs into our rivers.
- **Climate Change** – Amigos Bravos participated in efforts to petition the State, through the Environmental Improvement Board, to set a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions cap, which was adopted in 2010. We also took legal action to ensure that the Bureau of Land Management considers GHG emissions prior to selling oil and gas leases. Our efforts aim to shape the State's Climate Change Initiative by both reducing GHG emissions *and* promoting policies and restoration efforts to counter impacts from climate change on our rivers.
- **Dairy Regulations** – Amigos Bravos joined with two community organizations (Caballo Concerned Citizens and Citizens for Dairy Reform) and the Río Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club – with representation from the NM Environmental Law Center – to win adoption of New Mexico's first dairy industry-specific regulations.
- **Outstanding National Resource Water (ONRW)** – Amigos Bravos and its allies worked for nearly three years to get ONRW designation for streams, lakes, and wetlands in wilderness areas and to protect New Mexico's ONRW rules from being weakened. ONRW provides the highest level of protection under the Clean Water Act, but allows current and new activities to take place if they do not lower water quality. The new ONRW designations protect the quality of headwater streams, which is critical given the effects of climate change on water quality and quantity. The new rules provide strong protections while allowing public health and safety activities in emergency situations.
- **Triennial Review** – Amigos Bravos advocated for a number of major changes to water quality standards, including eliminating or limiting pollution loads in so-called "mixing zones," and tightening up the rules on compliance schedules, which currently allow polluters many years to clean up their discharges. Our biggest success was getting the state to adopt human health standards for radionuclides and to monitor for cesium, americium, strontium, plutonium and tritium in the Rio Grande below Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). Amigos Bravos also provided vigorous opposition to changing the way that "Use Attainability Analyses" (UAAs; a process for downgrading water quality standards) are conducted that would allow third party contractors (e.g. industries) to conduct UAAs on a fast track without public review.

HOLDING POLLUTERS ACCOUNTABLE

- **Los Alamos National Laboratory** – Amigos Bravos worked with our partners in Communities for Clean Water and the Western Environmental Law Center to successfully negotiate LANL's first Individual Stormwater Permit with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The permit, considered the most stringent stormwater permit in the country, will



ensure protection for the river and the new Buckman drinking water project. In 2008, Amigos Bravos and a number of community organizations and individuals filed a Clean Water Act citizen enforcement action against LANL for its stormwater issues. With resolution of the permit, we are now seeking to resolve the remaining issues of the lawsuit. [the lawsuit settlement negotiations ended successfully in April 2011]

- **Molycorp/Chevron Mining** – The Molycorp molybdenum mine (now Chevron Mining) has been a focus of our mining work for 22 years. In recent years, we participated extensively in lengthy negotiations over the terms of the Superfund cleanup of the mine. We advocated for: 1) a comprehensive cleanup and restoration plan for the Red River; 2) closure of the existing tailings facility, and; 3) financial assurance to cover the cost of cleanup and water treatment in perpetuity (which the mine owner is now required to do as a result of our 2007 lawsuit against the mine). In December 2010, EPA released a Superfund-mandated cleanup plan that will cost an estimated \$400-800 million.
- **EPA Hazardous Waste Financial Assurance** – Amigos Bravos worked with several regional organizations (with assistance from EarthJustice) to win a lawsuit against the EPA for long-standing failure to carry out its mandate to require financial assurance (FA) from all companies producing, handling, or transporting hazardous materials. EPA announced that they would begin developing FA rules for the hardrock mining industry.
- **Natural Gas Greenhouse Gas Emissions** – Amigos Bravos (represented by the Western Environmental Law Center) filed a lawsuit against BLM for failing to address climate change impacts of drilling for natural gas before issuing gas leases on public lands. As of this printing, the suit remains in the courts.
- **Clean Water Act Compliance** – Amigos Bravos monitors Clean Water Act compliance around New Mexico and routinely reports violations to the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers. In 2010, Amigos Bravos' reports resulted in fines and better compliance at several Taos-area construction sites. In addition, Amigos Bravos' comments on a Section 404 (dredging and filling) permit application in the Rio Chama resulted in more vigorous permit application requirements, such as doing an analysis of alternatives to the pollution-causing activity.



Photo by Diane Hargreaves

BUILDING A RIVERS MOVEMENT FOR THE FUTURE

- **Youth Water Quality Monitoring** – Amigos Bravos worked for two years with two high schools, Rio Grande HS and School on Wheels – in the semi-rural and largely Hispanic South Valley – to carry out water quality monitoring in the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District drains and ditches (see “Pharmaceuticals in the Middle Río Grande,” above). The students had hands-on experience conducting water quality monitoring. Rio Grande HS integrated the project across the 9th grade curriculum, with students producing posters or giving presentations at a Youth Water Symposium. We received numerous exclamatory comments from enthusiastic students, including that – prior to the workshop – they had no idea people could do this kind of environmental work as part of a career, they didn't know that the ditches played such an important role in their community, and they weren't aware of how water quality issues could impact their lives.
- **Taos Watershed Plan** – We are working with community groups to revise an earlier watershed plan for the Río Pueblo de Taos. The work will lead to river restoration projects developed and implemented by local groups with assistance and oversight from Amigos Bravos. This work has brought together a number of dedicated volunteers in efforts to monitor water quality and do outreach to other watershed stakeholders.
- **Southwest Rural Policy Network** – As a member of the Kellogg Foundation's Rural People Rural Policy initiative, Amigos Bravos has worked for the past four years with community organizations in New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado to develop policies for sustainable rural development. We have been responsible for making water a pivotal issue in the initiative, as well as for introducing environmental and social justice concerns into the discussion.
- **Environmental Alliance of New Mexico** – We are a leading member of the EANM, which watchdogs the State Legislature in order to prevent rollbacks and to push proactive environmental legislation.
- **Clean Water Circuit Rider** – Amigos Bravos' long-running CWCR program provides technical and organizational assistance to local communities. Major recent activities of the CWCR have been: 1) strategic planning with the Rio Colorado Reclamation Committee (formed around the Molycorp impact to the Red River), which led to their new strategic plan, hiring of three part-time employees, better internal and external communications, and a new name – the Red River Restoration Group; 2) providing technical oversight to the Water Sentinels of Taos' water quality monitoring program, which has led to three monitoring reports and a petition to the State to list three streams as impaired for E.coli; 3) capacity building for New Mexico Friends of River Otters, including fiscal sponsorship, fundraising assistance, and organizing assistance; 4) coordination and technical assistance to CCW as a group and to some individual members; 5) providing technical assistance to a drinking water group in the Albuquerque area, the Agua es Vida Action team; 6) facilitating a strategic planning retreat for Drilling Mora County and 7) presenting at regional and national conferences on Clean Water Act implementation.

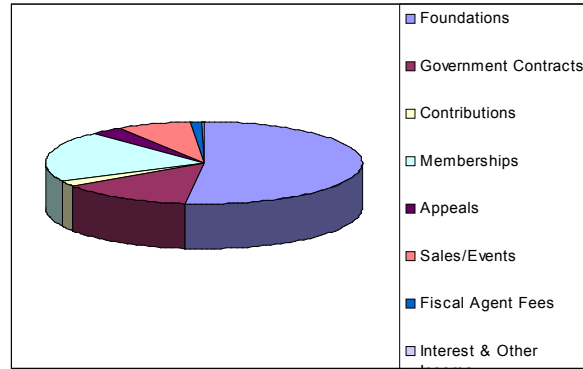


FINANCIAL REPORT FY 2010

Fiscal Year 2010 (October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2010) – Amigos Bravos ended its fiscal year September 30, 2010 with net assets of \$108,178. In FY2010, total revenues were \$373,064. Amigos Bravos is protecting its long-term fiscal viability through rebuilding its *Capital Reserve Fund* and the *Amigos Bravos Friends of the Wild Rivers Endowment Fund*, which is housed at the New Mexico Community Foundation and the Taos Community Foundation.

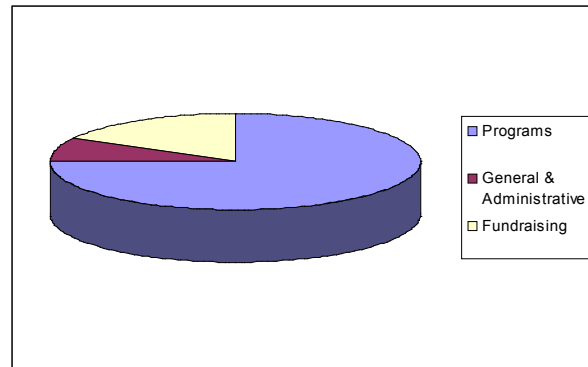
Support & Revenue

Foundations	194,056
Government Contracts	50,156
Contributions	7,469
Memberships	75,924
Appeals	12,190
Sales/Events	27,950
Fiscal Agent Fees	4,008
Interest & Other Income	1,311
TOTAL REVENUE	373,064



Expenses

Programs	294,757
General & Administrative	30,516
Fundraising	66,208
TOTAL EXPENSES	391,481



Assets

Net Assets, end of year	108,178
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	(18,417)

YOUR TRUST AND SUPPORT

We accept your contributions as a sign that you share our vision and mission and believe that we represent a conscientious and effective effort to connect the environmental, social, cultural, and spiritual values that our rivers and waters sustain.

WAYS TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT AMIGOS BRAVOS

- ≈ **Annual Memberships and General Donations.** Amigos Bravos is a membership-supported organization. We depend on membership dues and donations to carry out our mission. Unrestricted membership donations provide us with the flexibility to take action on emerging issues.
- ≈ **Project-Specific Donations.** Many individuals and foundations prefer to donate to specific causes and campaigns. Amigos Bravos welcomes project-specific donations.
- ≈ **Bequests and Planned Giving.** Individuals can support future protection of New Mexico's rivers by providing a gift through their will or living trust.
- ≈ **Capital Reserve Fund.** The Capital Reserve Fund is money set aside to ensure that Amigos Bravos can survive cash flow shortages in the annual operating budget. It can be accessed only following strict guidelines on when and how funds can be used, such as for payroll or emergency capital outlays.
- ≈ **Amigos Bravos Friends of the Wild Rivers Fund.** Amigos Bravos established endowment funds at the New Mexico Community Foundation and the Taos Community Foundation, both of which administer the endowment. Once funded at an appropriate level, interest from both endowments will provide supplementary, flexible funding across Amigos Bravos' programs and activities.

For information on making a special contribution to Amigos Bravos, please contact our office at (575) 758-3874 or at PO Box 238 • Taos NM 87571

MEMBERSHIP

We at Amigos Bravos deeply appreciate everyone who has contributed to support our efforts and sustain our organization, whether it was through a new or renewed membership, a family fund or foundation grant, a special contribution, or volunteer effort. (Categories are determined by donation amounts within a given fiscal year.)

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Photo by Kenneth Seal

VISION

We have a vision of New Mexico's rivers and streams running so clear and clean that you can bend a knee to the water, cup your hands and drink without fear. Realizing this vision – which was a reality in northern New Mexico only one lifetime ago – requires the wisdom, knowledge and participation of all New Mexicans in the effort to address social and political pressures poisoning our waters.

MISSION

It is Amigos Bravos' mission to return New Mexico's rivers and the Río Grande watershed to drinkable quality wherever possible and to contact quality everywhere else; to see that natural flows are maintained and where those flows have been disrupted by human intervention to see that they are regulated to protect and to reclaim the river ecosystem by approximating natural flows; to preserve and restore the native riparian and riverine biodiversity; to support the environmentally sound and sustainable traditional ways of life of indigenous cultures; and to ensure that environmental justice and social justice go hand-in-hand.



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To learn more about Amigos Bravos and its work, please visit our website – www.amigosbravos.org

